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Information Access and Digital Library Use In University Students' Education: The case of Ankara University

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Abstract

In this paper, an applied study was executed to expose the views and habituations of university students in regards to their use of digital library. The main aim of the study is to reveal the purpose of use, usage frequent and use tools for the digital library by students of Ankara University. The survey was carried out in three selected faculties in Ankara University. The study adopted stratified sampling to achieve a sample that approximated the distribution of the students in different faculties. The questionnaire was administered to 280 students, 169 students from Faculty of Letters, 52 students from faculty of pharmacy and 59 students from Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, selected randomly. The findings of the results show that whereas the students use the internet resources for school assignments, digital library is not yet placed as their first priority among their choices. One of the main reasons of this is not being aware of how to use the digital library. The second reason is that students find their own resources sufficient for their research. At the conclusion of the paper, orientation for digital library in curriculums at Ankara University is suggested to enable widespread use of the library services and networked resources among the students.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, an applied study was executed to expose the views and habituations of the university students in regards to their use of digital library. The main aim of the study is to reveal the purpose of use, usage frequent and use tools for the digital library by students of Ankara University.

Basic goals of this research in brief are:

- E What are the goals of students' internet use?
- E How do they reach information and what are their resources?
- E How often is the digital library used?
- E What are the causes of non-use of digital library?
- E What are the thoughts of university students on internet use?

The survey was carried out in these three selected faculties in Ankara University. The questionnaire was administered to 280 students, 169 students from Faculty of Letters, 52 students from faculty of pharmacy and 59 students from faculty of veterinary, selected randomly. The study adopted stratified sampling to achieve a sample that approximated the distribution of the students in different faculties. The technique employed in the survey was a standard questionnaire form which included open and close-ended questions.. The data was analyzed in order to draw comparisons between the responses of the students on the certain issues. Most of the evidence is primary data collected from the students of Ankara University.

1.1. Related Works

It is really difficult to determine the contributions of internet on university students' personal and career development. Researches in this area in Turkey are generally limited with defining socio-demographic features of internet users and collecting general information such as internet use frequency by the youth and goals of internet use; besides these, studies in Turkey include some researches on the role of internet on education.

In a report dated 2002 on the thoughts of university youth about internet, it is stated that students think that internet used to enrich their education, ease researches and academic studies even though with the technology of 10 years ago [1]. A research by Social Sciences Academy in China with a sampling representing five city populations are compared with the numerical values in our country and interesting results were found. According to the findings of this research, most of the internet users were between 25-34 ages while the second group was between 16-24 ages. In our country, the youth is the group that use internet the most and males at each age group use internet more than females. University, faculty and higher education graduates use computer and internet the most. Internet use ratio increases in parallel with the increase in internet education both in China and in our country. Most of the attendees in Chinese research see internet as an information center (%79), some of them as library (%29,5) and only (%10) as an environment of sending and receiving mails; besides these, e-mail usage is too much to underestimate [2]. On the other hand, internet is used respectively in order to send and receive e-mail, read newspaper and magazine, attend games and similar activities [3].

A research in 2008 in Niger Delta University supports the linear relationship between information literacy abilities and internet with the findings on the fact that internet resources such as search engines, web sites and e-mails are useful in meeting the necessities of academic information [4]. The first study on researching university students' internet use in Turkey dates back to 2000 [5]. Another study by Gazi University, Industrial Arts Education Faculty, Family and Consumer Sciences Education Department dealt with internet and computer usage situations together. To the question on determining the goals of internet use, most of the students in the research gave the answer that they use internet in order to send or get e-mail and to make researches. In this research,

according to e-mail usage, most of the students that use internet less than once in a week said that they use internet firstly in order to make researches [6]. In a similar study, some different results were obtained; the research published in 2006 focused on internet usage of teacher candidates in Hacettepe University Education Faculty according to their classes and departments. Most of the students in all departments said that they use internet for many reasons (%76.4); but in this research, activity of “reaching information”, “communication” and “game” activities were evaluated together (%76.4). In this case, when “to reach information for class/homework” is taken into consideration singly, it is understood that most of the students (%23.6) use internet for other reasons. Teacher candidates use internet the least at school (%0.8) [7]. In another study in 2008, views of Denizli Health High School students on internet use and the fields for which they use internet are researched together. It was found out that %55.3 of students had computers and they had education on computers. Views of students who connect to internet every day on internet use were higher than others’ views (%52). In this research, it was determined that most of the students use internet for “education”, but their relation with internet in terms of education weren’t researched. It is interesting that, according to this research, students preferred firstly internet cafés in order to reach internet (%44.7) rather than schools (%22) [8]. It was found out in a research in Punjab University, India, that internet use by university students vary according to education branch. In this university, % 90 of natural sciences students said that they use internet for academic reasons, while %30 of social sciences students and %5 of human sciences use internet for the same reason. Writer of the research emphasized that although academic resources are represented on-line in the university, in order to popularize the use of these resources, firstly academic members, secondly librarians should give education and encourage students [9]. Similarly, Çiçek and Demirel made a study in Turkey and according to the results of this study, they said that students should be guided on the issue of making use of data bases and electronic magazines that can contribute to students’ career development should be determined and they should be discussed with students. In this research, the aim of internet use of 1642 university students in Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Gülhisar Vocational School of Higher Education was researched. According to this study, among the aim of students’ internet use, researching information for homework is at the third rank while scientific research/literature review is at the ninth rank. [10]. Recent studies showing that internet is used mostly for educational activities by students suggest that internet technology in ten years hasn’t changed this tendency in internet use [11, 12, 13, 14]. Some other Turkish studies on students’ internet use also focused on evaluating university students’ attitudes towards internet [15, 16]. As these studies aren’t directly related with the aim of this study, they are not included here.

Limited number of researches in Turkey, whose results were evaluated for this study, show that internet is not preferred by university students in order to make research or to get professional and academic information. This is why, the issues of sufficiency of internet utilities, encouraging students use internet in education environments, the aim and frequency of internet use should be analyzed. Findings of research by Ankara University are discussed below in order to contribute to the studies in this field.

2. Findings and Discussion

2.1. General Information about Students in Ankara University

When gender distribution of interviewed students was analyzed, it was seen that %69,5 of students were female while %30,5 of students were males. As generally there are mostly females in some departments of the Faculty of Language History and Geography, this distribution is normal. Distribution of interviewed students according to classes are; %30 first grade, %30,7 second grade, %15,7 third grade and %23,2 fourth grade.

2.2. Use of Computer

%72,5 of interviewed students had computer at home. This ratio shows that students' computer use increase everyday and it is seen as a significant tool in preparing for classes. As is known, internet use increases everyday and it is used in various fields of our lives. It is also known that students use internet while preparing their homework and making researches. This is why, it is important to understand where they connect to internet. According to the research, the highest ratio is "Home" %53,4 and then "School" %25,4. These data show that students use their school very much in order to connect to internet. Some of the reasons of these are that they have limited place and computers to use for internet, they cannot use internet when they want. Another place to use internet is internet cafes (%19,4).

The significant of computer laboratories at schools increase everyday and it can be said that they are important for students in making researches and preparing homework. This is why; it can be significant to create environments that meet the needs of students in order to reach success. %85,4 of interviewed students said that they use laboratories in their schools. This data show that students prefer laboratories that they can easily reach which is why it is important to give this opportunity to them. On the other hand, the reasons why students don't use internet at school are; timing, crowd, waiting lines, not having some limitations and having computer at home.

It is significant to know for how long students use internet. When researches on internet users are analyzed, it can be seen that younger students and people use internet gradually every day [17]. Only %3,4 of interviewed students said that they use internet for 1 year while %21,5 use internet for 5 years. As can be seen from the table below, most of the students have been using for internet more than 3 years. When students' grades and ages are taken into consideration, it can be said that they started to use internet before starting university.

Almost half of the students (%49,5) said that they learnt to use internet on their own, %23,7 from their friends and %9,0 from family members. On the other hand students who said that "I learnt internet from school" is %12,2 while the ratio that attended a course is very low (%4,3). According to these results, school and courses aren't primarily important in learning the use of internet. Students learn using internet mostly on their own or from friends and family members. This situation can cause problems in effective and target oriented and it is significant to make more detailed researches in order to analyze this issue.

Table 1. How did you learn to use internet?

	N	%
I attended a course	12	4,3
From my friends	66	23,7
On my own	138	49,5
From books	3	1,1
From family members	25	9,0
From classes at school	34	12,2
Don't Know	1	,4
Total	279	100,0

Another significant issue is how much students use internet. %40,6 of interviewed students said that they use internet every day. %38,9 of these students said that they use internet for two hours in a day, %20,4 for 3 hours in a day, %14,2 for four hours in a day. Internet is used for many reasons. In today's world, many people use internet increasingly everyday for numerous reasons such as shopping, banking transaction, music, communication etc. It is important to know why students use internet, if they use internet effectively and

productively in order to understand if the time spent on internet is efficiently used or not. %96,4 of students said that they use internet in order to reach information for lessons and some other reasons. As can be seen from the table below, the ratio of using internet for other reasons is very low. Students prefer internet in order to get information especially for their lessons. The questions of does internet enable students increase their creativity or do students get used to reach everything easily is still controversial. Although researching this is not the aim of the study, use of internet without plagiarism should be discussed.

Table 2. The aims of internet use

	N	%
In order to get information for lessons or some other reasons	268	96,4
In order to connect with friends and other people	4	1,4
Music	2	,7
Banking Transaction	2	,7
Follow News	1	,4
Play Games	1	,4
Total	278	100,0

Most of the students have more than one e-mail address. %33, 7 of the students said that they have one address, %36, 3 said that they have 2 addresses. This shows that e-mail is a significant tool for communication.

2.3. Use of Ankara University Digital Library

Libraries are used less in parallel with the increase in the use of internet. Students' answers confirm this truth. %63, 3 of students said that they use internet more, %7, 2 said that they use library more.

Table 3. Internet and Library Use

	N	%
I use internet More	176	63,3
I use internet and library equally	82	29,5
I use library more	20	7,2
Total	278	100,0

The ratio of university students that use Ankara University Library on the internet is approximately %57. It should be taken into consideration that there is remote access opportunity to the library catalogue. The most important reason why university library isn't used is "I don't know how to use library" (%27, 3) and this is followed by "I have my own resources" (25, 6).

Table 4. What are the reasons why you don't use Ankara University Library on Internet?

	N	%
I don't know how to use library	33	27,3

I don't find enough resource in the library	7	5,8
I cannot reach the information I need in library	14	11,6
I have my own resources	31	25,6
Search engines give enough information	22	18,2
I prefer published resources	5	4,1
I cannot find new/updated resources	1	,8
Other	8	6,7
Total	121	100,0

It is seen that although it is possible to reach many databases on the web page of Ankara University, the ratio of students who use this is (%38, 2) low. The most important reason why students don't use available databases is "I don't have enough information about databases" (%55) and this is followed by "Databases are in English" (%27, 2). It is obvious that as education language in Ankara University is Turkish, and students don't know enough English is a significant reason. But as said by students, the most important reason is lack of information. Informing students on this issue will increase the use of databases.

Table 5. The most important reason why students do not use databases

	N	%
Databases are in English	46	27,2
I don't have information about databases	93	55,0
I don't need to use resources in foreign language	17	10,1
Other	9	5,3
Don't Know	4	2,4
Total	169	100,0

As mentioned before, most of the students use internet in order to reach information either for their classes or for some other reasons. %90, 6 of interviewed students think that using internet has positive effects on their education. How should internet be used and how does it affect education are controversial issues. Findings in the studies carried out in some countries such as Nigeria, India and Pakistan and in the studies on the relation between digital library use and internet use are mostly similar to the results of the research in Ankara University [18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23]. In these studies, internet is a digital media which is regularly used by university students and the use of it is mostly learnt either on their own or with the help of their friends [24, 25]. Similar to the other researches, it was seen that Ankara University students don't get enough academic support on the issue of using digital library resources. As emphasized in the literature, libraries and academic members should guide students about the use of internet with education programs.

3. Results and Suggestions

Findings of this research, whose goal was to relate Ankara University Students' internet use habit with digital library, is similar with the results of researches made in some other developing countries. Although students have positive views about the use of internet for education purposes, they don't have enough information about digital library resources such as databases.

As a result, it was seen that Ankara University Students don't use digital library effectively. The most significant reason of this is that they don't know how to use internet and don't know foreign language. Besides,

findings of the results show that whereas the students use the internet resources for school assignments, digital library is not yet placed as their first priority among their choices. One of the main reasons of this is “not to know how to use digital library”. The second reason is that students find their own resources sufficient for their research. At the conclusion of the paper, orientation for digital library in curriculums at Ankara University is suggested to enable widespread use of the library services and networked resources among the students.

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